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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 001193

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [NP](#)
SUBJECT: TIBETAN WELFARE SOCIETY UPDATE

REF: A. A. KATHMANDU 0891

[1B.](#) B. KATHMANDU 1134 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Charge Elisabeth I. Millard; Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary. UNHCR Resident Representative Abraham Abraham said on June 2 that he will likely meet with the Foreign Minister the week of June 6 to discuss the registration of a new UNHCR implementing partner in processing Tibetan Refugees passing through Nepal, the Tibetan Welfare Society. While it is urgent from an operational capacity standpoint to register the Tibetan Welfare Society, Abraham noted that the flow of refugees through Nepal continues and has not been adversely affected by His Majesty,s Government of Nepal,s (HMGN) closing of the unregistered NGO office. Abraham will also meet with HMGN the week of June 6 to discuss issuing refugee registration cards to 4418 pre-1989 resident Tibetan refugees. End Summary.

Tibetan Welfare Society Registration Update

[¶2.](#) (C) In a June 2 meeting in his office with PolOff, UNHCR Resident Representative Abraham Abraham appeared cautiously optimistic about the prospect of registration of the Tibetan Welfare Society. Abraham said that he had been pushing the issue for months and was pleased to get an unsolicited call this week from the Foreign Ministry suggesting that the Foreign Minister will likely be able to meet with him the week of June 6 to discuss the registration. Abraham said he is unaware of any issue, other than possibly changing the name of the NGO to take out any reference to Tibet, which would hold up the registration. From UNHCR,s standpoint, as long as the work can continue they have no problem respecting HMGN,s sensitivities due to relations with China by taking Tibet out of the name of the NGO. (Note: Foreign Minister Pandey told the Ambassador on May 29 that PRC Foreign Minister Zhou Gang raised the Tibetan Welfare Society with HMGN on his recent visit to Kathmandu. (Ref B) End note.)

[¶3.](#) (C) While it is urgent from an operational capacity standpoint to register the Tibetan Welfare Society, Abraham noted that the flow of refugees through Nepal continues and has not been adversely affected by the HMGN closing of the unregistered NGO office. UNHCR officials continue to go to the border to educate HMGN civilian and military workers on what to do in case they meet Tibetan refugees. They have encountered no resistance from HMGN in these efforts. While they do not know what instructions HMGN is giving to officials on the border, UNHCR notes that these officials are transferred every few months and so welcome UNHCR information on how to deal with Tibetan refugees.

[¶4.](#) (C) Abraham reviewed the work that UNHCR continues to do with Tibetan refugees. He said that there are new arrivals almost daily and stressed that UNHCR is able to meet their commitment to protect and process these refugees even though there is currently no implementing organization in place. The protecting and processing work is being done directly by UNHCR headquarters, staff deployed to the field, at times necessitating the staff to neglect their work at headquarters. Abraham stated that this situation can not continue indefinitely as Geneva headquarters is pressuring him to find a new implementing partner if the Tibetan Welfare Society can not be registered in the near future. As there is currently no other implementing NGO in Nepal with the capacity or capability to work with Tibetan refugees without a steep learning curve, Abraham firmly believes that the best way forward is the speedy registration of the Tibetan Welfare Society. He notes that he can not work with any organization in an unregistered state as that would leave UNHCR in a vulnerable legal position. For example, if someone at an unregistered NGO was found to be embezzling funds the UNHCR would have no legal recourse with that organization.

Pre-1989 Refugees Registration Cards

[¶5.](#) (C) Abraham shared positive news of movement on the issue

of refugee registration cards (RCs). UNHCR sent a letter in November 2004 to the Home Minister requesting HMGN to issue RCs to 4418 pre-1989 resident Tibetan refugees. Without RC cards, resident Tibetan refugee children who had reached the age of sixteen (the age when youth were previously issued RCs) are without any identification, increasing their vulnerability and making the pursuit of university education in Nepal difficult if not impossible. UNHCR sent a follow-up letter in March 2005. On June 1, 2005 the Home Ministry finally called UNHCR to set up a meeting in the week of June 6 to discuss the issue. UNHCR has stressed to HMGN that they will cover all financial and technical support necessary to issue RCs to all 4418 individuals.

Comment

16. (C) Thus far the Embassy has seen no undue delay on the part of the government to register the Tibetan Welfare Society. We will continue to press HMGN for speedy action on registration and issuance of refugee registration cards.

MILLARD